



GROUNDCOVER

News and Solutions from the Ground Up

OCTOBER 2011

VOLUME TWO

ISSUE NINE

Ann Arbor's resident radical, Alan Haber – p. 5

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A great community boosts Groundcover to a new level



by Susan Beckett
Publisher

August was a breakthrough month for Groundcover News (GCN). Not only did we sell out, we sold a record 4,000 copies – more than enough to cover our printing costs through circulation revenue alone. As of mid-September, we are on pace to

equal or exceed our August sales. If we can sustain this pace, our advertising revenues can finance programs which accelerate our vendors' quest for economic sufficiency and sustain GCN in the longer term.

Just how fortunate we are was further reinforced for me in my recent travels. In New York City, I encountered several men and women selling their street newspaper, Street Talk News. In exchange for my dollar, I received two

folded 8 1/2 by 11 sheets, resembling a small pamphlet and containing little content. When I asked if this was all there was to their paper, the woman who sold it to me replied, "We are just starting up again."

Earlier in the month I attempted to visit the street newspaper in Nairobi, Kenya, only to learn that they, too, had suspended operations. Though they were attempting to restart, it appeared to be a daunting endeavor. Two

commercial daily newspapers are also sold on the streets for \$1 and much of the population nets only \$5 pay per day.

We are blessed on so many levels, and those of us at GCN are immensely grateful for the support of our readers, writers, advertisers, donors, office staff, editorial staff, and the many faith organizations that allow us to sell on their property. We have an extensive network of support. Our success reflects that of our community. Thank you!

Letters to the Editor

GROUND COVER NEWS

MISSION:

Groundcover News exists to create opportunity and a voice for low-income people while taking action to end homelessness and poverty.

Susan Beckett, Publisher
contact@groundcovernews.com

Laurie Lounsbury, Editor
editor@groundcovernews.com

Contributors:
C. Lee Alexander
Martha Brunell
Andrew Nixon
Rissa Haynes

Letters to the Editor:
editor@groundcovernews.com

Story or Photo Submissions:
submissions@groundcovernews.com

Advertising
contact@groundcovernews.com

www.groundcovernews.com

423 S. 4th Ave, Ann Arbor

734-972-0926

Library lot would make a great Library Green

I was interviewed by Groundcover as an Ann Arbor activist, about all the big radical past history of this place. In the present, I've been walking and talking and meeting and writing in favor of a green place in the center of town, an Ann Arbor community commons, what people are coming to imagine as the "Library Green," above the underground parking construction next to the Downtown Library.

I have been calling on all the communities of Ann Arbor, and all people who home here, housed and otherwise:

"What would you like to see on the library lot?"

The library lot is as close as there is to the center of downtown. It belongs to all the people. We should be able to do something

beautiful there. We need a place dedicated to something more than money, and getting taxes for the government. I think we need, and every community needs, a place dedicated to the creation of a culture of peace and non-violence for the children of the world. A place for people of all ages to play, to meet each other, to enjoy the outdoors, to attend concerts and plays, to dance, to hold community celebrations.

While some people are focused on the prize: "I want a park, and keep it simple;" I, as an old radical, want a park with a purpose. We need a park because we need community, a central green place, a canvas on which the diversity of the town can show its many selves and evolve over the years.

I want a teaching place that we try to make a paradise, where everyone can be happy and safe, where we

can learn from one another new ways of living, green, carbon free, self reliant, friendly, healing.

Of course, it is no surprise that some people among the decision makers are anxious about a place where the community of Groundcover would be at home. Practical people tend to dismiss high purpose. They worry about the possibilities of crime, drugs, alcohol, pan-handling, and some people's general fears (and ignorance) of poor and homeless and black or brown or different.

Clearly, making a place of community for everyone in Ann Arbor is no simple matter, however high the purpose.

The idea of the "commons" is that the place belongs to everyone and everyone shares a mutual responsibility to take care of it. It seems to me that the "Groundcover"

community is among the most knowledgeable in the arts of taking care of one another and mutual aid. I believe among Groundcover readers, producers and vendors, there is a wealth of creative inspiration on real and permanent good for Ann Arbor, and particularly for the library lot.

I hope the paper will take up an on-going discussion, in letters and articles, on city planning for downtown Ann Arbor, on what is going on in the decision making, and "what would you like to see happening on the library lot?"

I believe if the Groundcover community found its voice and took its place in the city decision making, fearful anxieties would be eased, and real problems and challenges better identified.

Alan Haber
megiddo@umich.edu

Please join us at the
Groundcover Volunteer
Meeting
7 p.m. Monday, Oct. 3
Bethlehem United Church
of Christ, 423 S. Fourth
Avenue, Ann Arbor

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Finding the beauty in doing what you love

by Rev. Dr.
Martha Brunell
Pastor,

Bethlehem United Church of Christ

I was among the thousands who participated in this year's annual Labor Day Bridge Walk on the Mackinac Bridge. Most of them were new people for me that day.

For the 54th time, people streamed across the bridge from 7 a.m. until 2 p.m. There were a few runners who took off first, but it was not a competitive run/walk. We weren't trying to raise awareness around a cause.

And it wasn't a pledged walk during which we were all trying to accumulate funds for an important issue.

Those of us who walked early on Labor Day saw the sun rise to the east and also received an unexpected treat to the west. There was enough moisture in the air that as the sun rose, a full rainbow appeared in the western sky. It was one of those unexpected, take-your-breath-away moments. As beautiful as the simultaneous sun rise and rainbow rise were, there was a more ordinary beauty that caught my attention even more.

I love to walk and have stepped my way through a variety of walks over the years. During October I will be out there for both the annual CROP walk and the annual Striders walk for the American Cancer Society.

But let's go back to the beauty of the bridge walk. There were many people walking hand in hand. I have never been in the midst of so many fellow walkers with a limp or using a cane or walker for support. There were walkers on crutches and walkers sporting dozens of patches for every prior year they had walked. So many people around me took

the time to thank the young National Guard men and women who lined the bridge edges at regular intervals. I was in the company of thousands of people who were simply walking for the love of the walk, suspended over those five miles of powerful water. People were out there because they loved it, and that love of the walk was palpable.

One of the best things any of us can do for our ongoing mental health is to take advantage often of simple things that we love. They don't have to be fancy or expensive. We just need to keep track of what and

who and where brings us joy and energizes and animates us. When we do that, we can reframe a dreary day or rebalance our lives if they are out of whack. And when we check in frequently with the embrace of our everyday loves, others around us can catch the beauty we are setting loose. What a lovely thing to share!

I may not see you on the bridge next year. But I do hope we all make a practice of delighting and supporting ourselves with uncomplicated and steady joy. So, what do you love? What love might you take some time for today?

Perspective allows us to see how others might think

by Rissa Haynes
Groundcover Vendor

The world is made up of many perspectives. They are sometimes referred to as worldviews. One of the things that excited me about Groundcover is that it appeared to be a paper that was going to be a balanced news source of information, providing a platform for the impoverished and home-challenged to express and get exposure to various worldviews. While creating opportunity for vendors to earn income, Groundcover has been making a difference and changing lives with the distribution of this great publication. I am proud to be associated with Groundcover. I hope to stay connected in some way for a long time.

My efforts to be a great vendor of this publication include listening to my customers. I must say that almost all of my customers are very pleased with Groundcover News and look forward to each new issue. There were a few customers who offered suggestions for improvement. One customer suggested (with a smile) that my articles should be more controversial.

To that end, I submit the following piece.

THE LION AND THE LAMB: An Unlikely Pair

When going through their academic career, children are commonly labeled at kindergarten, and that label follows them throughout their academic life as long as they stay in that system. Why? Because our social network was founded on making character assessments of individuals through



stories and opinions passed down from one generation to another. We preferred to make our alliances and conclusions about others based on our previous experiences. Whether the experiences were first-hand or through reliving experiences of others, we conclude there are no changes that can or have occurred from one generation to the next. As the Incurable Optimist, I beg to differ.

For example, many drivers will moan at the thought of red and blue flashing lights on the highway when police are involved. We may assume that some "cop" had nothing better to do than harass some motorist for going too fast or riding around without a seatbelt. Yet, what a welcome sight are those lights when we incur emergencies on the highway, such as flat tires, gasless vehicles, or auto accidents that involve us. Unlikely pair: smiling motorist (you) with police by the side of the road.

There are many who judge a book by its cover. Humans tend to make up their minds instantly upon appearances. Haven't you learned to dislike (or like) something because it's appealing or repelling to your comfort zone? No amount of information can convince

many of opposite conclusions once their mind is fixed on a perspective. Yet, a little patience, exposure, and time can help many to revolutionize their worldviews.

Consider this sign to the left:

At first glance, a Brewer's tow truck would not be a welcome vehicle here. However, if the owner's car keys were locked inside or these vehicles had difficulty starting, a Brewer's Tow truck

see PREVIOUS, page 7

Bethlehem United Church of Christ
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Bethlehem Church is home to the *Groundcover* office

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October 2 ~ 37th Annual CROP Walk
(Begins and ends at Bethlehem Church)
October 22 ~ Parking Lot Pretzel Sale (noon to 4 pm)
November 11 ~ Annual Luncheon/Bake Sale/Bazaar
(10:00 am/luncheon served 11:30 am to 1 pm ~ cost
\$10.00)

an invitation to grow in spirit and serve with joy

AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

The House by the side of the road



By C. Lee Alexander
Groundcover
Contributor

*"But I turn not away
from their smiles nor
their tears,
Both part of an infinite*

*plan –
Let me live in a house by the side of the
road
And be a friend to man..."*

– Sam Walter Foss

The House By the Side of the Road is much like any thrift shop, with racks of gently used clothing, shoes and a small array of toys. What distinguishes it from other thrifts? Everything at The House is free. Since 1969, The House has served the community by collecting household items and redistributing them to those in need.

For most of its history, The House was run from a building on loan from Washtenaw County. At the beginning of this year, they opened a space nearly three times as large. The move, along with a handful of policy changes, means that the organization is positioned to dramatically increase the number of clients they serve. Clients are eligible for services four times per year.

Until recently patrons of The House were expected to receive a referral from a church or a social worker to receive services. That has changed. Another policy restricted assistance to residents of Washtenaw County and that too changed. The bottom line: if you show up at The House you'll get help.

Frankie Arnett has worked at The House for roughly two decades and currently serves as its director. She applauds the relocation. "We do have a much better place," Arnett says. "We went from 1,500 square feet to the building we're in now. We have something like 4,200 square feet. We're kind of reveling in the fact that we have more space."

The House's new spot is located at 824 Phoenix, off Ellsworth between State St. and Stone School Rd., and it's directly on a bus route. Its hours are Monday-Friday 10am to 2pm. Locating a place accessible to public transport was partly responsible for the five months between

leaving the old location and opening the new building.

"A lot of our people do come by bus," Arnett says. "People are finding us, though, and this is good. We're working to get out the information that we have moved and please come find us."

"It took us a little while to locate this building. We knew it was going to open back up again. As soon as we could find something, it was going to open. I don't think we ever entertained the thought that it was going to close permanently."

The House started as an outreach program through a network of local churches. They still receive a substantial portion of items through the faith community. The policy of distributing everything as gifts draws substantial support from donors attracted by their 'for-free' business model.

"People come to us and say, 'I wanted you to have it because you don't sell it,'" Arnett says. "The other groups that do this kind of work, yes they do sell, but it goes right back into the programs that they help people with. But that doesn't seem to make any difference: people who donate don't want things to be sold. So they bring it to us, and of course we're very happy with that."

The House has a heartwarming tradition of making welcome packages for arriving babies. This provides opportunities for those in the community to contribute without committing to volunteering on a schedule.

"If people like to work at home, like knitting or sewing," Arnett says, "and then just bring the results in to us – if we have supplies that we can give them, we'll give it to them. We graciously accept the gifts of their labor."

The House is like a lot of non-profits: it's fueled by volunteers. They come because of the familial environment. The camaraderie keeps them returning. Many have pitched in here for years. Phyllis Husted can boast at being a regular for 42 years. She says, "I come mainly because it's worthwhile and I so love the people I work with."

Husted said that part of her role is to



From left: Volunteers at the House by the Side of the Road include: Carole Hunter, Flossie Robinson, Prudy Ditmar, Phyllis Husted, Carole Starnes.

sometimes act as a counselor for those facing hardship. It's not so much that she offers advice, but just functions as a sympathetic ear. It can at times be heartbreaking, particularly when children are involved. "They tell us such sad stories," Husted says. "I suppose that it's good for them to be able to talk to someone." She says that sometimes people just need someone who'll listen.

Carole Hunter is another volunteer who's racked up nearly nine years at The House.

"We have a kind of friendship among the volunteers here," Hunter says. "We all enjoy being here together. We do have a lot of fun."

The most gratifying thing to Hunter is just how much the people are pleased with what they get.

"They're very grateful," she says. "It's very satisfying. The children get some toys and books and some get

really excited. The children are very enjoyable when they come in with their parents. That's one of the joys for me."

The volunteers agree that one whimsical charm to their day is marveling at the strange and unusual things that circulate through The House.

"No matter what is donated," Hunter says, "it seems that everything will eventually find a home. Once,

see GOODS, page 11

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Ann Arbor's resident radical continues to seek change

by C. Lee Alexander
Groundcover Contributor

Anyone acquainted with Ann Arbor politics, even those on the periphery, will be familiar with the name Alan Haber.

And even more will recognize him around town, clipboard in hand, collecting signatures or passing out information for whatever initiative he's currently spearheading. It's earned Haber the nickname, "Ann Arbor's resident radical."

It's not unusual to stumble across folks in Ann Arbor who spent substantial portions of college protesting war and injustice during the 1960's. What makes Haber different is that his youthful idealism remains intact five decades on. He's still confident that citizens can create political change simply through the moral weight of their cause.

Over the years, many of the activists that formed the "New Left" gradually crept toward the political center, sometimes substantially. A few are perhaps even staunchly conservative now. The political leanings of Tea Partiers today couldn't be much further from 1960s activists like the Students for a Democratic Society, but they have something in common. The far-right's vocal protesting style, the marching and demonstrating (like it or not) was forged on college

SDS members became influential anti-war activists and a real thorn in the side of the status quo, but the group was born as a reaction to racism and not war. Haber recalls, "The only place of integration at the school was the football team and the Cultural Folklore Society."

A shift began in early 1960

campuses in America during the 1960s. Young revolutionaries changed how Americans view their relationship with government and what it means to be politically active.

In 1954, Haber's first year at the University of Michigan, America was still in the grips of cold war hysteria and the lingering effects of McCarthy's witch hunts were settling. Aligning oneself with left-leaning intellectuals like Jack London or Upton Sinclair wasn't just unpopular, it was dangerous. Student organizations with names like the Intercollegiate Society of Individualists, or the American Students Union (popular years earlier) had long disappeared from campuses. At Michigan, there were two political groups—the Democrats and Republicans. Soon Haber and handful of others formed another, the Political Issues Club. Within a few years, PIC evolved into the Students for a Democratic Society.

SDS members became influential anti-war activists and a real thorn in the side of the status quo, but the group was born as a reaction to racism and not war. Haber recalls, "The only place of integration at the school was the football team and the Cultural Folklore Society."

A shift began in early 1960

as student sit-ins, protests against discrimination, began cascading across the South.

"What was going on we didn't know," Haber said, "but there

"What was going on we didn't know, but there was ferment. Immediately, student governments began to voice support for the southern students."

— Alan Haber

that April, and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee was formed. Alan Haber was there.

"Two weeks after the formation of SNCC," Haber said, "SDS had its first national meeting. The meeting's topic was discrimination in the North."

During the national meeting Haber was voted in as SDS's founding president. The group's platform developed to include more than social and economic justice and their leadership in the burgeoning peace movement grew. America had maintained a small presence in

Southeast Asia even before the 1960s, but gradually we were being sucked deeper into the conflict there. The war began to escalate.

"We made our first statement against the Vietnam War in 1961," Haber said, "when Kennedy first sent in advisors. As the war ramped up though, it became much more of a focal concern of the youth, and not just students, but all the youth."

The next milestone for SDS was a lengthy declaration that's now called the Port Huron Statement. At their 1962 national gathering near Port Huron, Mich., members patched together a document that outlined the philosophical foundations of SDS. It was popular largely because it articulated so well the anxiety of typical middle class youth who could see injustice built into a system that created and protected their privilege. The introduction to the statement reads:

"We are people of this generation, bred in at least modest comfort, housed now in universities, looking uncomfortably to the world we inherit...

"These contemporary social movements—for peace, civil rights, civil liberties, labor—have in common certain values and goals. The fight for peace is one for a stable and racially integrated world."

At Port Huron, SDS voted Tom Hayden, the former editor of Michigan's student newspaper, to be their next president. Hayden took the lead in sculpting the Port Huron Statement.

"It's a merger of 100 voices," Haber said. "Tom did an excellent job of bridging all these themes together. It had

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October Calendar of Events

Oct. 3, Groundcover volunteer meeting, 7 p.m., Gallery Room, Bethlehem UCC, 423 S. 4th Ave, Ann Arbor.

Oct. 6, HEARING VOICES NETWORK support group formation for people who hear voices, facilitated by local psychologist, Dr. Rebecca Hatton. Free. 6-7:30 p.m., Ann Arbor Friends Meetinghouse, 1420 Hill St.

Oct. 19, Public hearing on the County budget; cutting human services has been recommended. County Administration Building, 220 N. Main St., Ann Arbor

Oct. 23, 6 - 9:30 p.m. Stevie D and the Wannabes benefit dinner and dancing concert for the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County Rotating Shelter program. Order dinner from the menu and a portion of the proceeds will be donated. Creekside Grill (downstairs), 5827 Jackson Rd., Ann Arbor.

Oct. 26, Vampire's Ball: A Benefit for Food Gatherers at Zingerman's Roadhouse, 6:30 - 9 p.m. Tickets \$126 or 2 for \$250, include dinner, 2 drinks, gratuity, tarot card readings and donation. Reservations required; 734-663-3663.

Key vendors, volunteers now able to attend conference — thank you!

In response to the story we ran last month about vendors and volunteers wishing to attend the upcoming annual National American Street Newspaper Association convention, we received generous donations from the following individuals:

Irwin Goldstein

Marty Mayo

Ed and Ellie Davidson

Kenya: A country of contradictions, from poverty to plenty

by Susan Beckett
Publisher

Kenya is complicated. Masai women living on the plains squat at ponds to fill water jugs, and chat on their mobile phones as they lug the jugs back to their homes. Their crowded houses are framed with branches and plastered with dung but any member of the tribe can get permission to build on tribal land, so no one is homeless. Mules, motorcycles, cars, and trucks share the roads with the ubiquitous child-shepherded goats and cows grazing at the edge and crossing at will.

Electricity follows the few paved roads serving urban areas and tourist stops, ending long before the plains.

Even in Nairobi a shack in the slums can be had for \$5 a month, well within the reach of even the underemployed. Able-bodied, unskilled people have a 50/50 chance of finding work for the day digging, sorting vegetables or unloading boxes. That provides sufficient income for a tin shack, cooking charcoal, a basic grain and vegetable diet and maybe even money for school supplies for the children. For those debilitated by disease, the government offers no support beyond dispensing the treatments for TB and HIV/AIDS supplied by multi-national foreign aid. Many of the slum residents have houses in their tribal villages and often members of their immediate family still reside there, but medicine and jobs are scarce except in the big city. As one cab driver explained, "No one ever goes hungry upcountry. Food grows so abundantly up there but if you live there, you'll never have any money in your pocket."

Nairobi is a modern city with two airports, luxury high rise apartments, and a downtown replete with modern office buildings, nightclubs, and restaurants representing every cuisine. But there is no public trash collection or recycling, and open lots become piles of trash. Though most people use buses or matatus (passenger van shuttles crammed with 14 passengers), "the jam" – bumper to bumper, stop and go traffic – begins by 4 p.m. and continues past 8 p.m., six days a week. None of the cars, buses, trucks or motorcycles are equipped with catalytic converters, so the exhaust fumes are overpowering and much of the population suffers from asthma.

Slums adjoin golf courses on one side while estates adjoin the others. Everyone is selling but hardly anyone is buying at the tin shack kiosk-style shops that line the slum streets, until 6pm when the domestic and industrial workers return home seeking an evening meal and other necessities. While many stop at the shops or at the makeshift vegetable sellers who spread their produce on the burlap sack-lined street, some patronize the hotels, informal eateries where the patron eats whatever the owner has made that day.

Restaurants, found outside the slums, have menus. Some upscale restaurants have very extensive menus. Like electrical service, internet access and so much



else in Kenya, an item on a menu may or may not be available when you want it. Seasoned patrons know to ask, "Do you still have it or is it finished?" as even staples are often sold out within half an hour of a meal time. (Going early doesn't help, as nothing is ready yet.) One frustrated traveler I met asked, "Do you ever have strawberry milkshakes? Why are strawberry milkshakes on the menu if you never have them?" The waiter smiled, raised his finger and declared, "Someday, we will have them!"

This optimism and determination is endearing, though challenged by the grating of the frequently unmet expectations. Worst of all is the lack of certainty surrounding bathrooms. In many places, there aren't any. Some of the newer businesses in the slums are bathrooms equipped with sanitary latrines, showers, soap and running hot water. Even in the airport, you never know if there will be a toilet (with or without a seat) or a hole for squatting over, and there is rarely toilet paper, soap or any means for drying your hand after rinsing them in the cold water.

Yet the Kenyan cell phone system, Safaricom, and the data plans it offers are vastly superior to those in the U.S., particularly in terms of availability and affordability. Cell phone minutes are an accepted form of currency. The streets are lined with people selling minutes which can then be used for buying groceries, paying bills, or surfing the internet in addition to talking on the phone for fractions of a penny per minute – thereby providing even the poorest people with a viable savings mechanism. Phone based internet does not go out and is available even in remote areas.

From top left: Used shoes delivered for sale at a kiosk; a man rests in the cart he pulls; cement block tenements with ground level shops are fronted by tin-shack kiosks and beside modern apartments. (Photos by Susan Beckett)

It seems that every household has at least one entrepreneur, and small businesses are so ubiquitous that every bank has a microcredit department. Under the system of law established by the British and adopted with its independence, Kenya has prospered compared to many of its Sub-Saharan African neighbors. Yet, bribes are routine transactions from top to bottom. Determined to curtail corruption, Kenyans are attempting to overhaul their legal system, as they revise their constitution to incorporate more accountability. The growing middle class seems determined to break the hold of the current politicians, which could mean another round of violence in this peaceful, tourist-oriented country.

1 **Matters.org**

Calling on the community to confront the climate challenge



by Andrew Nixon
Groundcover
Contributor

Citizens and activists throughout Washtenaw County converged on Sunday, September 25, at Liberty Plaza in downtown Ann Arbor to brainstorm ways to move the region toward sustainability.

The event, co-sponsored by the Ecology Center's Ann Arbor 350 climate change initiative, Transition Ann Arbor, and the Washtenaw Bicycling and Walking Coalition, capped a round of local events this weekend revolving around September 24th's Moving Planet Day, an international day of climate action. Across the globe, over two thousand grassroots events in 175 countries were held this weekend to generate awareness of climate change issues and to mobilize concerted political efforts to curb global warming. Communities throughout Michigan, including Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor, held events.

"The goal of all this is to demonstrate the public commitment to confronting the crisis of global warming, and [motivate] some of our leaders to take action," said Jeannine Palms, one of the event's speakers. "It's a heavy job; it'll take a lot of us. The question now is: How will we, as inhabitants of the Huron River Watershed, move beyond fossil fuels?"

More than 50 individuals attended the

event, including representatives of local non-profits, local officials, and concerned citizens. State Representative Jeff Irwin, whose 53rd District encompasses Ann Arbor and part of Washtenaw County, provided the keynote address.

Locals were given the opportunity to share their personal visions of what an economically thriving and more ecologically sustainable Washtenaw County of the near future might look like. Ideas offered up to the crowd included:

- Establishment of a community commons on top of the underground parking structure now under construction beside Ann Arbor's downtown library (this proposal has been presented to the City Council)
- Creation of a local workforce to retrofit buildings for energy efficiency
- Holding social gatherings to promote neighborhood bonding and resource sharing
- Promoting a low-carbon diet
- Further improvements to bicycle and pedestrian transportation infrastructure

County Commissioner Yousef Rabhi, who also spoke at the event, encouraged citizens to get involved in



Ann Arbor resident Rita Mitchell contributes her two cents in a workshop at Moving Washtenaw County. Held at Liberty Square on September 25, the event provided a forum for local residents and community leaders to share ideas on moving the region beyond dependency on fossil fuels. Photo © Joe Sharp

the public process, and emphasized that sustainability means economic security for the region.

"When we think about our sustainable future, and when we think about what is going to happen in this community when we don't have fossil fuels anymore, we need to remember that part of our movement – sustainability – is about jobs. It's about the economy; it's about making sure that everybody in our community has a chance either to make a living or to contribute," stated Commissioner Rabhi.

Following the sharing of personal visions, attendees were invited to break into issue-specific "networking sessions" covering education, transportation, housing, food, water, and energy.

Participants closed the event with a bike parade that circled the downtown area.

For information about ideas explored at this event for moving Washtenaw County toward a sustainable future, and to learn how to get involved, visit www.aa350.org

Previous experiences impact perceptions in the present

continued from page 3

would receive a great greeting, complete with smiles and sighs of relief from vehicle owners.

Now consider this recent letter to the editor of Groundcover, submitted by one of my customers:

June 1, 2011

Groundcover Editor,

Reading Martin Stolzenberg's article published in your March 2011 edition caused me to reflect on how crimes committed sixty-five years ago still find relevance in local newspapers. The crimes depicted by Mr. Stolzenberg were committed by a German government against a number of groups, Jews being one of them.

His story is linked to Ann Arbor through one family, and there are scores if not hundreds of Muslim and Palestinian families living in Ann Arbor, who have connections to the crimes committed by the Israeli government against Muslim and Christian Palestinians.

The big difference is that we taxpayers are footing the bill for Israeli crimes, but did not support the German government when they were committing similar atrocities. Ann Arbor's homeless population would be much better off if taxpayer dollars – US Foreign Aid to Israel is between \$7 - \$15 million per day – were redirected to those who need it.

The story in the March 2011 issue of Groundcover referred to in this letter was not calling attention to the German atrocities against Jews, but to the unlikely miracle of a young boy who lived to use his gifts and

talents in Ann Arbor as a physician to ultimately save and heal the lives of others. This is what I mean: at first glance, previous experiences may flood emotions and cloud our assessments with limited judgments of others and things.

Groundcover is a publication that was established to give indigent vendors a voice and opportunity. Those vendors don't all share the same backgrounds, worldviews, or goals and dreams. They do share the opportunity to go from where they are to another (and hopefully better) place in their lives via this Groundcover vehicle. I don't believe it is the intention of this newspaper to perpetuate prejudices. I do believe it is intended for this Groundcover vehicle to give a hand to the housing and income challenged through interaction between unlikely pairs: the "Haves" and the "Have-nots."

PUZZLES



Cryptoquote

DJ OJW UZ AKHY RS WYJ YLQRW ZP DJLGRSO
CRUOKRUJU QJPZGJ ZWYJGU

WYLU DJ PRSLXXB LEEJLG CRUOKRUJC QJPZGJ
ZKGUJXTJU.

- PGLSHZRU CJ XL GZHJPZKHLKXC

GROUNDCOVER VENDOR CODE

While Groundcover News is a nonprofit organization and newspaper vendors are considered contracted self-employers, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

The following list is our Vendor Code of Conduct, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

All vendors must agree to the following code of conduct:

- Groundcover News will be distributed for a voluntary donation of \$1. I agree not to ask for more than a dollar or solicit donations by any other means.
- I will only sell current issues of Groundcover News.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover News Staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other Groundcover News vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.
- I agree to treat all customers, staff, other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover News under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover News but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover News and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover News.
- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor. I will also abide by the Vendor corner policy.

If you see any Groundcover News vendors not abiding by the code of conduct, please report the activity to:
contact@groundcovernews.com
734-972-0926

They Roam on Halloween

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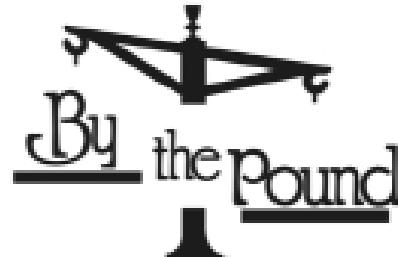
ACROSS

1. Inexpensive
6. Push
11. Mythical creature
14. Black character
15. African city
16. Government agency (abbr.)
17. Snow leopard
18. "____ the day, I know you not..."
19. Government agency (abbr.)
20. Imbibed
22. Like neon
24. Saturn's wife
27. Conjunction
28. Eastern character
30. Western character
32. Son
33. Cog
34. Burn
35. Commercials
38. Color
39. Wood fasteners
40. Assist
41. Article
42. Empowered
43. Desire
44. Smith's equipment
46. Pink character
47. Southern character
50. Engineering company
51. 100%
52. Non-literal expression
53. White character
55. Time period
56. Spins a log
59. Twenty-third State
63. Jazz musician Adderley
64. Cream of the crop
65. Performed
66. Gold (Italian)
67. Futuristic character
68. Impoverished
8. "____ Clear Day"
9. Health club chain, ____ Tanny
10. Northern character
11. Redirect
12. *Die Walküre*
13. Cholla and saguaro
21. More than zero
23. Ascetic
24. Group of eight
25. Dog
26. Vowed
28. Measuring device
29. Broadcasts
31. Energy unit (abbr.)
32. Confederate
34. Quarters aboard ship
35. Addis ____ , Ethiopia
36. Red character
37. Iron alloy
39. Blue character
40. Profit-to-investment ratio (abbr.)
43. Primitive character
44. In the past
45. Sequential identification
46. Container
47. Stringed instrument
48. Poe or Burroughs
49. Grandchild (Spanish)
50. Picture within a picture
53. Type of saxophone
54. Chantilly product
57. United Nations agency (abbr.)
58. Bone
60. Resident of (suffix)
61. Actor Beatty
62. Ice cream manufacturer Joseph

DOWN

1. Ellensburg school (abbr.)
2. Hua ____, Thailand
3. And so forth (abbr.)
4. Acetylsalicylic ____,
5. Ancient character
6. Get up
7. Green character

Puzzle by Jeff Richmond



Bulk & Gourmet Foods

- Tea
- Spices
- Coffee
- Snacks
- Flour
- Beans
- Grains
- Dried Fruits
- Pasta
- Nuts
- Candy
- Baking
- Chocolates

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One phone number to call for those in need of housing

All individuals and families seeking housing or shelter assistance in Washtenaw County will now start their search by calling the Housing Access for Washtenaw County crisis line, 734-961-1999.

This change to a single point of entry is in line with national priorities and best practices and the Washtenaw County Blueprint to End Homelessness. It was also mandated by the state funder of most housing programs, the Michigan State Housing Development Authority. Phone calls made directly to shelters will be redirected to the Housing Access line.

With the implementation of this single point of entry Monday, October 3, households experiencing housing instability or homelessness will be directed to call one phone number (734-961-1999) where they will receive an assessment of their needs and a connection to available resources.

Each caller will receive a short intake screening that will illuminate their level of housing instability and/or homelessness. Callers who would be considered part of a "special population" (youth, domestic violence survivors or veterans) will be connected to the appropriate community agency directly (Ozone House, SAFE HOUSE, or the VA hotline).

Non-housing related calls will be linked to other community resources depending on the need, for example utility concerns, car repairs or food. If the screening determines a household is low risk for chronic homelessness, they will be supported with homelessness prevention services and one-time only funding assistance, as long as it is available.

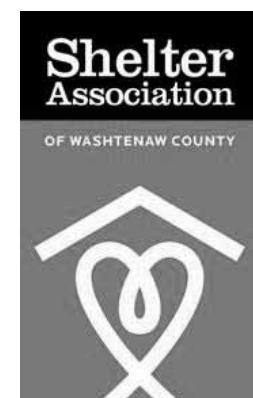
If the household is believed to be at a higher risk or presently homeless, a full assessment will be conducted by the Housing Access staff who will then determine the best fit for the household among an array of options, including Homelessness Prevention, Rapid Re-Housing, short term Emergency Housing shelter for less than 30 days, medium term Emergency Housing of 30-90 days, Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), Transitional Housing, Shelter Plus Care vouchers, Public Housing, HARP vouchers, etc. Shelter bed assignments for both families and single individuals will be made through the Housing Access.

Change like this in other communities has shown three things: Households will be better served with more efficiency, less running around and longer-term stability. In a year, our community will have a much clearer picture of the un-met need.



POWER

734-961-1999



SAFEHOUSE
C E N T E R

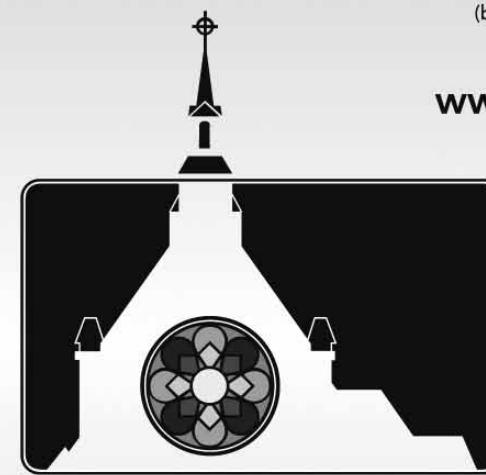
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free of domestic violence
and sexual assault

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Reverends Paul & Stacey Simpson Duke

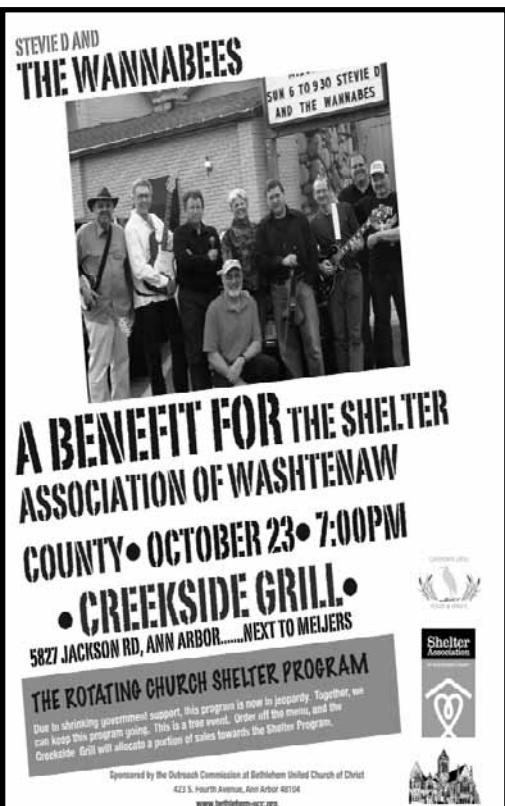
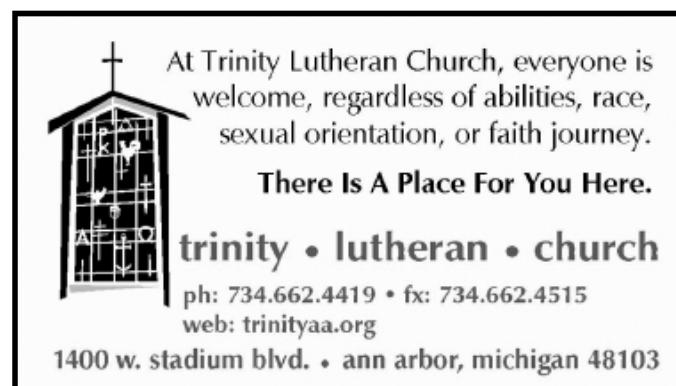
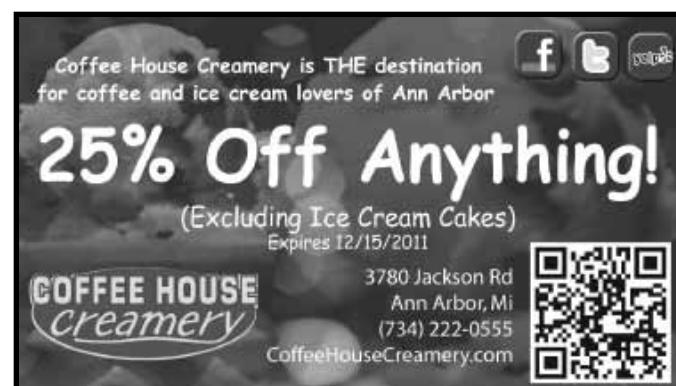
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Festifool fellow and art professor wrapped in one man

by Susan Beckett
Publisher

Whether you know him as the man behind the Festifool puppets, a professor at the U-M School of Art and Design, or the recipient of one of the first Kiva Detroit loans, there is no doubt that Nick Tobier is a man with fresh perspectives. His desires for color and meaningful social interaction have formed his art to the point that it guides even the production process. He is drawn to public projects based in experience, not possession, and strives to solve social problems in the process.

The world of museum exhibitions and gallery shows proved too lonely to sustain Tobier. The ephemeral thrill of seeing his work admired and purchased was less rewarding than the deep connections he forms with the current recipients of his work. "In my life as an artist, I felt like a chess player and my only contact was with the person on the other side of the board. It was lonely," Tobier recalls.

According to Tobier, designers are trained to produce luxury goods destined for museums or possession by celebrities and business moguls. He now creates for the poorest 90% of the world. "It is so much more interesting to deal with complexity and people with a different world view," he explains. He also values the social life of his work and asks himself, "What am I adding to the world besides more landfill?"

Tobier had an epiphany while taking a break from his life as a traditional artist. He returned to his landscape architecture roots and took a one year position with the city of New York to refurbish an old park. As he sat with his CAD (computer automated design) program evaluating the park, another employee approached him with the challenge to find something



Nick Tobier, a man with fresh perspectives.

useful for 35 volunteers, all 12 year-olds, to contribute to the restoration that summer. Trading in his computer for shovels, he and the kids built trails, restored an old cemetery and uncovered an old marble test plot that seemed like an homage to Stonehenge. In fact, its marble columns had been set 100 years earlier at the direction of Andrew Carnegie who was evaluating types of marble for use in the construction of Grand Central Station.

Working in the moment and the deep connections he made with the kids, impelled Tobier to incorporate people into his process. He now strives for collaboration as early in the process as possible. He finds that the sooner he involves those who will interact with the finished creations, the greater the transformations that take place. That leads him to create for those who are in his immediate environment.

While living in Western New York state and teaching at Alfred University, he was overcome with the bleakness and monochromality of the late fall and winter landscapes. Craving warmth and comfort, he constructed a colorful, portable "hot chocolate" tent. He'd set up the tent downtown and invite passersby to come in for a cup of hot

chocolate and conversation. Once the thermos was empty or the chocolate cool, he'd pack up his tent and go home until the next time he felt the urge to bring it to life.

When colleague Mark Tucker introduced Festifools, a parade of oversized puppets to welcome spring in Ann Arbor, Tobier jumped right in to help out and share the opportunity with his students. Festifools' mission to bring students and community volunteers together to create unique public art that is free and accessible to everyone aligned perfectly with Tobier's personal stance.

Detroit has been the recipient of much of Tobier's creative output in recent years as he and his students seek to use art to break through some of society's thorniest problems. He challenges himself and them with the question, "What are you introducing that is changing the dialogue of the world?"

Tobier spent time in Detroit, observing and absorbing life there. He noticed people dully standing at the empty corners and waiting for the bus. Back in his studio, he built a padded bench on wheels, outfitted with a radio and canopy. He brought it to Detroit, wheeled out his portable bus stop and waited for company. Sometimes only one person would take advantage of this latest gesture of generosity, but sitting and talking with them while they waited, was rewarding to Tobier.

He next constructed a newsstand on a trailer that can be pushed by hand or towed by a car. This newsstand both collected and dispersed news. Along with old fashioned, bamboo library newspaper stands made for browsing, it was outfitted with silk screen broadsheet and videotapes so people could record answers to the question, "What is the most important

thing people should know about your neighborhood?"

Learning that access to healthy foods was a pervasive problem, Tobier and his students worked for two years on a mobile produce stand that they set up in various Detroit neighborhoods under the watchful eye of three men he met at the Capuchin soup kitchen. (He ate his meals there while he was building an outdoor classroom in that Detroit neighborhood.) The presence of the local men and the whimsy of the stand helped alleviate the suspicions of people who had not yet met Tobier. More than just a stand, the men strove to incorporate civility and inspire socializing while buying vegetables. A testament in part to their success, the urban agriculture movement has since taken hold in numerous Detroit neighborhoods.

Brightmoor Bikes is Tobier's most recent venture. The remote and blighted Brightmoor neighborhood, targeted for annihilation by the Detroit Department of Public Works, was not well served by city buses and received no positive attention from the city. It is populated by elderly residents reluctant to leave their houses and young activists working to save it. Brainstorming with recent high school grads, they embarked on a mission to make the neighborhood self-sustaining and determined that, rather than waiting for rescue, "We can start something."

Recognizing that besides walking, biking is the only mode of transportation available to many in the neighborhood, Tobier considered how to expand their utility to meet more of people's needs. He was also struck by the sense of futility he encountered in the teenagers and young adults. He responded with the Brightmoor Youth Employment Project, in partnership

see NICK, page 12

Strange (but Mostly True) Stories About a Mother and her Daughter • Cy Kline © 2011



Radical Ann Arbor resident fights for worthy causes

continued from page 5

power because there were so many people who could hear their voice in what was being said."

From the outset, top leaders within SDS began disagreeing about the group's trajectory. Hayden wanted to expand into more communities while Haber thought this would create strains on their resources.

"Alan felt it was more important to intellectually define a radical agenda." Hayden said, "To prepare people to be radicals in their professional careers."

Haber described these disagreements as, "rock-em, sock-em."

"I was of the view that our national organization could not support community projects all over the country," he said. "I lost the debate."

By 1969, the Students for a Democratic Society had collapsed, partly under its own weight. Its growing popularity made it a target, and later it emerged

that the organization was rife with informants and government provocateurs. Many now agree that the tactics used by the authorities to undermine SDS were almost certainly illegal. "Everything became very hard-edged then," Haber said.

"There were agents within the group whose intent was to sharpen debate, to make unbridgeable differences and to factionalize us."

A few years before the demise of SDS, Haber had already left the area for New York and eventually to Berkley. He didn't return to Ann Arbor until 1991. In many ways, though, his vision had expanded and become increasingly global, reinforced by a visit to Israel in 1974.

"I was quite taken with how beautiful the country was," he said. "The Middle-East had not been an issue at all in the political movement that I had been a part of."

In 1977, Haber made his first trip

to Megiddo. Tel Megiddo is an archaeological site in Israel that dates back more than 9,000 years. In the last book of the Christian New Testament, Megiddo is said to be the site of Earth's final battle. This spot is more commonly known by its Greek name—Armageddon.

Alan Haber has since traveled many times to Megiddo, and he has a dream for a global gathering there—the 'Megiddo Peace Summit.'

"Our vision was for an end of the wars in the world," he said, "not just Israel and Palestine. But once you're there, you realize war is all those people see... If you want a big peace, then you go to the place of the big war."

Philosophizing on world-peace might seem lofty or perhaps naive, but Haber's style is the roll up your sleeves and get to work in your local community, brand of activism. Currently he's leading the charge to create a community commons, called the "Library Green," atop the soon to be completed

underground garage adjacent to the library. Haber is quick to point out though that what organizers envision isn't simply another park.

"A park is a public facility provided by the city," he said. "The commons is an open space, but it's managed in a way that everyone cares for everyone. It's a place where you're glad to meet people you wouldn't otherwise meet."

Originally the Library Green site was slated to become a privately managed convention center, but that plan faced strong opposition which, in part, led to the idea being abandoned. The future of the space remains unclear but Haber is directing all of his five decades of activist experience toward this effort.

"This involves responsibility to the place as well as access," Haber said. "It is a culture of people watching out for one another and being concerned with one another's survival. It's a culture of mutual responsibility. If we had a place that honored everybody, we would indeed take care of it."

Goods at the House always find new homes

continued from page 4

somebody donated three pairs of size 15 shoes. It wasn't long, wouldn't you know, before somebody came in looking for a size 15 pair of shoes."

Hunter is of the opinion that the organization had outgrown the old space. "I was afraid that we wouldn't get the people dropping off or coming in," she says, "but it happened. The word got out. I think we needed the move because the other place was so

crowded. We needed to find a bigger place. People just keep bringing things in too."

"When we were over at the other place, we were right around the corner from Safe House. Some of the abused women would come and get things because they were starting over. Many of them just walked off and left all of their stuff behind."

Arnett says that although they no longer require clients to have referrals,

she suggests that they get involved with other service providers in the community. Clients can receive clothing and small household items from The House, but if individuals need food or healthcare, they're not in a position to provide these.

"If you need help," Arnett says, "just show up. We take whoever comes in. If you would like to see another organization ahead of time, that's fine. Otherwise, we will help you try to find another location that you can go to

for other services. I can't give clients a 'referral' for an organization, but we might be able to give you some leads on more help."

Donations to The House by the Side of the Road can be dropped at the building's rear-entrance, Monday-Friday, from 10 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. Items most needed are bedding, dishes, and small appliances. Individuals interested in volunteer opportunities can call 734-971-2550.

Puzzle Solutions from page 8

CRYPTOQUOTE

We get so much in the habit of wearing disguises before others that we finally appear disguised before ourselves.

—Francois de La Rochefoucauld

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9	1	8	2	3	5	7	6	4



Don't write cover letters on an empty stomach

by Laurie Lounsbury
Groundcover Editor

If President Obama's "American Jobs Act" doesn't get passed

by Congress, you might be one of the unemployed people whose emotional status will go from deeply concerned to flat-out panic-stricken. You might have the urge to start writing cover letters and applying for every last job left in your home state, even if they are far beneath your qualifications.

Don't do it! You're going through a crisis of confidence at this point. Waves of despair are rolling over you like the gray water in the rinse cycle of a front end loader. Writing a cover letter when you're lacking self-confidence is like drinking on an empty stomach – you skip amiable and go right to sloppy.

A cover letter written when you can't muster up the false bravado needed to

pad your qualifications might look like this:

"Dear Person-With-The-Low-Paying-Job-That-Kinda-Fits-My-Qualifications:

"I am eagerly applying for the job you recently posted online for a Blankety-Blank staff person.

"I believe I am ideally suited for this position, based on my skills and prior work experience. Well, maybe not ideally suited, because one of your job requirements states that you are looking for someone with proven successful management skills. I don't really know if my management skills are proven to be successful. I've only managed a few people, plus an intern, and I don't think interns count as people. I think they all liked me but that could be because I occasionally dropped the F-bomb when we went out for cocktails after work and they found that quite hilarious, coming from a woman my age. I don't manage my Jack Russell Terrier very well at

all. The only way I can get control of him is to put one of those dog zapper collars on him and zap him when he misbehaves. Do you allow zapper collars at your company?

"Your job posting also stated that you're looking for someone with excellent organizational skills.

"Just how strictly do you define 'excellent'?

"I'm reasonably organized when it comes to filing paperwork. Retrieving it is another matter, since my filing system is based on whatever is foremost in my mind the moment I create the file. If I design a new logo for a client that has a cool drop shadow, I'm likely to file it under C for Cool Drop Shadow.

"I also really need one of my desk drawers to be a disorganized junk drawer where I keep my Slim Fast power protein bars, a red rubber clown nose, change for the soda machine

and little scribbled slips of paper that I probably don't need but keep

'just in case.' Sometimes those slips of paper turn out to be important and I can't find them in the junk drawer, but it's good to know they're in there somewhere.

"You mention in your job posting that you are looking for someone with design software skills, including Photoshop. I guarantee you I have mastered the liquify filter in Photoshop. I won't let anyone post a photo of me online until I have applied the liquify filter to my double chin. It's a great tool! I look almost normal after I use it on myself. The rest of Photoshop is largely a mystery to me but I manage to muddle around in it fairly well by ignoring the most confusing tools.

"I hope you will consider me for this position, but I would understand if you don't, since I just got laid off and there are probably loads of younger, more talented people you could hire."

Sincerely,

My Name

(But please don't google it because you might find a very unflattering photo of me in an intoxicated state kissing Jamie McCorkle smack on the lips at our high school 20th reunion.)

Tobier uses art, creativity to help underserved populations

continued from page 10

with the Brightmoor Detroit Community High School, which provided part-time jobs for recent high school graduates. They built custom bamboo bike trailers, some of which were fashioned to haul gardening tools while another featured a cooler for ice cream. They are developing one for deliveries and another to transport instruments for a rock band. The most common model holds 150 pounds and costs around \$85.

When they received a start-up loan from Kiva Detroit at the start of this summer, they metamorphosed into a business and took the name Brightmoor Bikes. Though each of the trailers has been handmade to satisfy the needs of a particular customer, off-the-shelf models should become available as solutions to general needs are perfected. About the loan,

Tobier notes, "The Kiva loan has been most instrumental in visibility – from the launch to the publicity. The money doesn't hurt, for sure, but it is all the infrastructure and the network it provides that really helps."

It's hard to know what the future will hold, but Tobier would like to build a bicycle with a bamboo frame. He favors bamboo since it is renewable, inexpensive, strong and beautiful.

When he gets around to it, you can be pretty certain it will be a

group project that will benefit an underserved population.



Top: Nick Tobier rides a tricycle while wearing a chandelier on his head during the Festifool's newest event, Fool Moon.

Right: A colorful hot chocolate tent captures the interest of a police cruiser.



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